App. F. IX-4

Previous References

1930-31
(P. P.)

File No. 114/30
Serial No. 1

Later References

General and Revenue Secretariat.

Serial No. 1

Part B for April 1931

SUBJECT.

Copy of a note by His Highness the Nawab Sahib of Bahawalpur on the subject of the proposed Indian Federation

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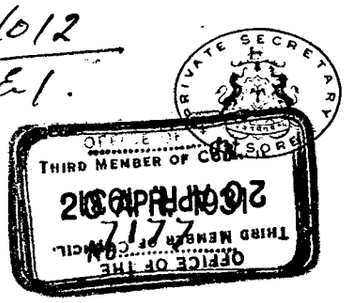
D.O.No.1012
E/.

Awdry House,
Fern Hill, 15th April 1931.
16/4.

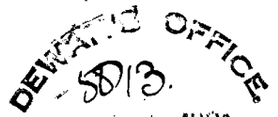
5 p.m.



C.B.354/
PP 114-30-1

Dear Mr.Madhava Rau,

I am desired to forward herewith for favour of disposal copy of a note by His Highness the Nawab Sahib of Bahawalpur on the subject of the proposed Indian Federation.



Yours sincerely,
C.B.Dewan

Sir
RB
17/4/31

Dewan

17-4-31

Submitted to
Members of Council

1251
22/4

Copies

22/4/31

NOTE BY HIS HIGHNESS THE NAWAB SAHIB OF BAHAWALPUR.

The idea of the federation of Indian States into British India has been considered to be necessary for the protection of the rights of the States. In other words it is argued that the British Government is delegating its powers to British India and unless the Indian States throw in their lot with British India, the entire power will go to British India and the States will be left at a disadvantage. Therefore the States should federate with British India to have a share in this delegated authority.

The picture as depicted by His Highness of Bikaner is very rosy. We gain everything without sacrificing anything. But is all that we demand being conceded to us? Suppose it is not, what is the alternative? Suppose we do not get equal representation as visualised by His Highness of Bikaner in both the Federal Houses we shall be in a minority. If we are a minority, we shall always have to act according to the will of the majority. His Highness of Bikaner says that in that case, we should not join the federation. What shall be our position then? All these considerations demand that we should have alternative proposals or some better substitute for Federation.

My rough plan which I submit for your Highness's consideration is outlined below. I claim no perfection for it. But I throw it simply as a feeler for your Highness's consideration.

The British Government is said to be divesting itself of power in favour of British India and we shall only get a share of it, if we

we federate with British India. The power enjoyed by the British Government is both; in respect of British India and Indian States. Why should it, on devolution, go to British India alone? and why to the Indian States only on the condition of federating with British India? Cannot the power enjoyed by the British Government in respect of Indian States, in such matters regarding which it is being devolved, be delegated directly to each Indian State individually? The principal Common Federal Subjects at present are:-

(1) Customs
(2) Railways
(3) Posts and Telegraphs.

Is it not possible to make the States autonomous in these matters? I believe it is.

(1) Customs duties should be levied by States as in Kashmere.

(2) Indian States should be given full proprietary rights over such portions of railways as run through their territories.

At present many Indian States have their railways and no difficulty is found as regards their working arrangements.

(3) Posts and Telegraphs could also be left to the sole care of States, and a sort of inter-Indian Postal Union could be formed for proper working. Conventions regarding emergency and proper working could be established.

In lieu of these the States should give annual contributions to the central Government for the upkeep of the defence.

This plan would obviate the necessity of federating with British India. But as we are fully determined to co-operate with British India, there should be a suitable machinery exactly and solely on the lines of the League of Nations and the International Court of Arbitration in which the Princes and provinces of India should participate for the common good. To put briefly, instead of a federation of provinces and states on the Lines of the United States of America, I propose a league of India comprising of the representations of Indian States and British Indian Provinces on the lines of the League of Nations.